Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended):   A method of playing a casino game with a normal play mode ~~and a free play mode~~, the method comprising:

receiving a wager <u>from a player</u> for the casino game in said normal play mode,

generating a game outcome in response to receiving the wager in <u>said</u> normal play mode;

<u>randomly displaying, in response to the game outcome, a message to the player to select a symbol in the plurality of symbols in the game outcome;</u>

<u>receiving an input in the casino game from the player selecting a symbol in the game outcome;</u>

<u>revealing a hidden value behind the selected symbol;</u>

<u>paying the player an award when the revealed hidden value is the award;</u>

initiating ~~the~~ <u>a</u> free play mode when the ~~game outcome matches a first game outcome~~ <u>revealed hidden value is a free play symbol</u>;

continuing<u>,</u> in said free play mode<u>,</u> to play the casino game <u>to game outcomes</u> until ~~the~~ <u>a</u> game outcome ~~matches a second game outcome~~ <u>contains at least one stop symbol</u> which stops the free play mode and returns the casino game to the normal play mode.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (original):   A method of playing a casino game with a normal play mode and a free play mode comprising:

randomly entering the free play mode from the normal play mode,

randomly entering the normal play mode from the free play mode, such that the frequency of entering the free play mode from the normal play mode is less than the frequency of entering the normal play mode from the free play mode.

-4-

Claim 4 (original):   The method of claim 3 wherein said randomly entering said normal play mode from said free play mode provides a variable number of consecutive plays of said casino game between different instances of said free play mode.

Claim 5 (canceled)

Claim 6 (currently amended):   A method of playing a casino game having a normal play mode ~~and a free play mode~~, the method comprising:

~~initiating~~ playing the casino game in said normal play mode ~~of said casino game~~ to a game outcome;

randomly displaying in response to the game outcome a special symbol to the player to select a symbol in a plurality of symbols in the game outcome;

receiving an input in the casino game from the player selecting a symbol in the plurality of symbols;

entering ~~said~~ a free play mode of said casino game ~~from said initiated normal play mode~~ when the selected symbol reveals a free play symbol;

enabling play of the casino game to remain in said free play mode for a variable number of plays of said casino game, each play ending in a free play mode game outcome; and

exiting said free play mode of said casino game upon completion of said variable number of plays.

Claim 7 (currently amended):   The method of claim 6 further comprising:

for a given casino game outcome having a normal-play-mode award, paying a multiplier award equal to the normal-play-mode award for said given casino game outcome multiplied by a multiplying factor, for at least a portion of said plays of said casino game in said free play mode.

Claim 8 (original):   The method of claim 7 wherein the multiplying factor equals three.

Claim 9 (currently amended):   The method of claim 7 wherein said paying comprises:

~~paying only said normal-play-mode award level for bonus game awards occurring in said free-play-mode~~ <u>said multiplier being one</u>.

Claim 10 (currently amended):   The method of claim 6 wherein said ~~initiating~~ <u>playing</u> comprises:

receiving a wager from said player.

Claim 11 (currently amended):   The method of claim 6 wherein said ~~enabling~~ <u>exiting</u> comprises:

permitting said play of said casino game to remain in said free play mode until a randomly occurring triggering event takes place <u>thereby completing said variable number of plays</u>.

Claim 12 (currently amended):   The method of claim 11 wherein said permitting comprises:

ending said play in said free play mode upon <u>randomly</u> incurring an appearance of a stop symbol in a game outcome during said free-play-mode play.

Claim 13 (currently amended):   The method of claim 6 wherein said entering comprises:

~~selecting a~~ <u>providing the</u> free-play-mode ~~value~~ <u>symbol</u> at random ~~from a plurality of values~~ <u>in the plurality of symbols in the game outcome</u>.

Claim 14 (canceled)

Claim 15 (currently amended):   A method of playing a casino game having a normal play mode ~~and a free-play-mode~~, the method comprising:

~~initiating~~ <u>playing the casino game in</u> said normal play mode ~~of said casino game~~ <u>to a game outcome</u>;

randomly displaying, in response to the game outcome a message, to a player to select a symbol in the game outcome;

receiving an input in the casino game from the player selecting a symbol in the plurality of symbols in the game outcome;

entering ~~said~~ a free play mode of said casino game ~~from said initiated normal play mode upon occurrence of a particular game outcome in said normal play mode~~ when the selected symbol reveals a free play symbol;

remaining in said free play mode until an occurrence of a randomly occurring triggering event; and

re-entering said normal play mode from said free play mode upon the occurrence of said triggering event.

Claim 16 (original): The method of claim 15 wherein said entering comprises:

randomly generating said particular game outcome from a plurality of possible game outcomes.

Claim 17 (currently amended):   The method of claim 15 wherein said remaining comprises:

generating a game outcome for each play of the casino game in said free play mode;

evaluating, after each said play of said casino game in said free play mode, whether said game outcome in said free play mode includes a signal operative to stop said free play mode; and

ending said free play mode only if said stop signal is provided.

Claim 18 (original): The method of claim 17 further comprising:

providing an at least substantially equal probability of inclusion of said stop signal in said game outcome for each said play of said casino game in said free play mode.

Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 17 further comprising:

providing an identical probability of inclusion of said stop signal in said game outcome for each said play of said casino game in said free play mode.

Claims 20-29 (canceled)

Claim 30 (new):   The method of claim 1 wherein the message is displayed as a message symbol as one of the plurality of symbols in said game outcome.

Claim 31 (new):   The method of claim 1 wherein the casino game is a slot game and wherein the normal play mode are reel spins to a game outcome on wagered pay lines.

Claim 32 (new):   The method of claim 31 wherein the normal play mode and the free play mode use the same reels to spin to game outcomes and wherein the message symbol converts to the stop symbol when the free spin symbol is revealed.

Claim 33 (new):   The method of claim 1 wherein each symbol in the plurality of symbols in the game outcome for normal play has an associated hidden value.

Claim 34 (new):   The method of claim 1 wherein a number of hidden values are randomly chosen from a set of hidden values to correspond to the number of symbols in said plurality of symbols, at least one of the hidden symbols in the set being the free play mode symbol.

Claim 35 (new):   The method of claim 34 wherein at least one of the hidden symbols in the set is an award value symbol.

Claim 36 (new):   The method of claim 34 wherein at least one of the hidden symbols in the set is a null symbol.

Claim 37 (new):   The method of claim 34 wherein at least one of the hidden symbols in the set is a multiplier symbol.

-8-

Claim 38 (new): The method of claim 34 wherein the number of hidden symbols randomly chosen is less than the number of hidden symbols in the set so that not every game outcome having the randomly displayed message has the hidden value of a free play symbol.